

THE FLYNN'S' YEAR IN REVIEW

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD,
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
Jeremiah 29:11*

Greetings friends and family! We hope that you are enjoying the blessings of this Christmas season. Welcome to our annual labor of love, the Flynn Family Christmas Newsletter! We hope that it will give you an idea of what we've been up to this year.

Carl continues as Visiting Lecturer of Religion at Pepperdine University while he moves toward the completion of his Ph.D. in Religion from Baylor University. He loves the ministry of teaching, and we have enjoyed having several of his students in our home. He teaches four undergraduate courses per semester (a combination of New Testament survey courses and a course entitled “Christianity and Culture”) that keep him on his toes. In addition, he recently created a theology and film course that was accepted into the University catalogue. Carl also dedicates several hours per week to his dissertation. He makes slow, but sure, progress and hopes to be finished with his Ph.D. by the end of next year. Carl has recently applied for a full-time, tenure track position with Pepperdine and will go through the interview process in the next few months. He hopes that his ministry to students will continue at Pepperdine for many years to come. In addition to his teaching and dissertation work, Carl helped to teach a volleyball course on-campus and played on an Intramurals volleyball team (his team lost in the Championship match!) this past semester. So, as usual, he's very active!

Chantal has spent most of this year realizing the blessings that God has given her since being back in California. She enjoys her role as Administrative Assistant in the Seaver College Career Center at Pepperdine. She is “the glue that holds together” seven staff members, six interns, and 13 student assistants (six of whom she directly supervises). Her work is teaching her how to be a better servant and, like Carl, she sees it as a ministry. Her greatest joy and blessing comes from the amazing, amazing relationships that she has built with many of the students (especially the interns and student assistants in her office), and she is “Auntie Chantal” to several of them. Does she miss Waco? “Every day,” she answers. But this year she has been reminded that God is faithful and good to us all the time, regardless if “our plan” turns out not to be His plan. Additionally, Chantal proudly and enthusiastically represented her class of 1992 at Founder's Day convocation this past September. She has also led the charge to resurrect the Faculty/Staff Songfest group (for you Pepperdiners). She continues to be Carl's #1 fan and very much looks forward to the completion of his Ph.D.

Since we are both working at Pepperdine, many of our “extra-curricular” activities revolve around University events: graduation ceremonies (Carl marches as faculty and Chantal helps with the Dean's Office staff); student theater productions; University Church of Christ events; college Care Group; and Campus Ministry retreats, just to name a few. We have also become dedicated and devoted yoga practitioners! Since we began yoga this past May we have both made marked progress: Carl is able to touch his toes for the first time since junior high and Chantal is able to fold forward and place her palms flat on the floor! We also continue to be involved in the fight against breast cancer. This year we participated in the Revlon Run/Walk for Women in May (we were two of the 75,000 participants), volunteered at the Avon 3-Day Walk for Breast Cancer in October, and walked in the Komen Foundation's L.A. County Race for the Cure in November.

We were also “on the move” throughout the year, traveling to places as near as Disneyland and as far as Montreal, Canada! In January, we took Disneyland by storm with three of Carl’s former student assistants from Baylor University. We also had the opportunity to enjoy Universal Studios (thanks to Dad and Deb!), several trips to Universal CityWalk, and Disney’s California Adventure (thanks to Mom and Chuck!). We visited with friends at our 10-year college reunion in February and at the Pepperdine Bible Lectures in April. We made our bi-annual pilgrimages to Lake Havasu for the Memorial and Labor Day weekends to spend time with Carl’s family (and particularly to see our niece, Carlene). In May, we traveled to Arizona, where Carl officiated at the memorial service for his Grandpa Flynn, who passed away in February. In June, we flew back to Texas for nine glorious days to see our extended “family”. In July, Carl took Chantal down to Laguna Beach to experience the “Pageant of the Masters” (where actors recreate art masterpieces). We traveled to Las Vegas in August to celebrate the wedding of Carl’s brother, Eric, to Christine Cruise. In September, Carl’s family gathered in Apple Valley to witness the baptism of Steve Russell (Carl’s stepmother’s stepfather). In November we attended Carl’s annual professional conference in Toronto, Canada. While in Canada we traveled to Montreal to visit Chantal’s only living grandparent, Grandma Lucie, who is rapidly declining after her decade-long battle with cancer. We are thankful that we were able to see her and to say our goodbyes. During the year, we also traveled independently. Carl attended a John Howard Yoder conference in Indiana in March and the Christian Scholars Conference in Oklahoma in July. Carl also attended the City of Angels Film Festival in November. Chantal enjoyed a wonderful weekend away with the women of University Church of Christ in October.

We also had the opportunity to entertain visitors this year. Dustin Pascal, Jason Hanline and David Hanline from Baylor University (Carl’s former student assistants and our Disneyland dates) stayed with us in January. We had a wonderful dinner with Judy Anders during Lectures in April. Chantal’s life-long friend Jenni Irish Minewiser, her husband Jim and toddler daughter Tessa traveled from Michigan to visit with us in June. We also enjoyed dinner with Chantal’s cousins Preston, Bonnie and Joe in June. In July, we spent a day with Pat and Sharon Hynan (two of Carl’s former Baylor co-workers), who were in town on business. Our dear Waco friends Brent and Katherine Gibson came for a whirlwind long weekend in August. If you are ever in the area, give us a call. We would love to see you!

On a romantic note, we celebrated the 10-year anniversary of our engagement on March 28 with a reenactment of Carl’s proposal (we even borrowed Chantal’s former on-campus apartment, the scene of the original proposal, from its occupants), roses and dinner. On December 12 we will celebrate our 10th wedding anniversary, and plan to return to Carmel, where we honeymooned, staying in the same room of the same bed and breakfast! We look forward to a relaxing time, which will be a fitting close to such a busy year!

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Love,

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On a carriage ride at Jay and Hannah Parmelee’s wedding in June